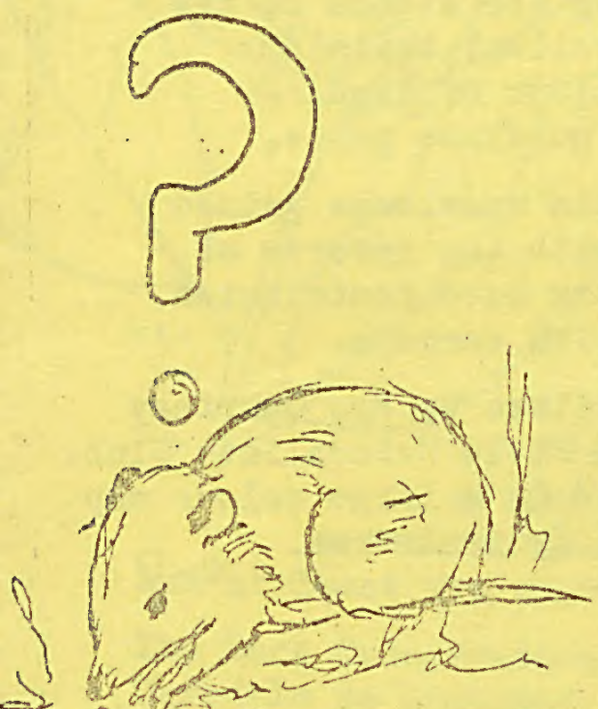
CASTLEMAINE NATURALIST

MAY 1982 68

WHAT ANIMAL WAS THIS ?

Last month Jim Newell saw an animal at Muckleford which he did not recognise. His description was that it was greyish-fawn with white patches, and about the size of a domestic cat, but with a shorter tail and a more pointed nose. It was carrying two young ones on its back. Mr Newell saw it run off under a log, where it disappeared from sight.



I looked through my copy of "Australian Mammals" - a field guide for N.S.W., Vic., Tas., and South Australia, by Hyett and Shaw. The animal seems to fit the Short-nosed Bandicoot. It is a common animal and the habitat is right, as is the size and colour. The white patches are not clear - perhaps a shine on the coat? There is no description of how the young are cared for when they leave the pouch.

Perhaps someone could give some more information? R.M.

THE WASP by Jirrah Walker

When Mum and Tamsin were picking me up from school we were walking across to the car and on the edge of the road we saw a black and orange wasp carrying a paralysed Huntsman Spider nearly twice its size. The wasp crawled off the edge of the road and started dragging the spider through the grass. It once let go of the spider and looked around as if it was lost. It then took hold of the spider and set off - hopefully in the direction of its hole.

Later Mum showed me in a book that the Salius Wasp takes the spider to feed its young. As the spider was paralysed it would stay fresh until the larvae hatch out.

Book Review

THE DISTRIBUTION AND CONSERVATION OF VASCULAR PLANTS IN THE NORTH-CENTRAL AREA, VICTORIA by A.C. BEAUGLEHOLE

The major conservation event for Castlemaine this year is without doubt the publication of Cliff Beauglehole's book listing the plants of the North-Central study area.

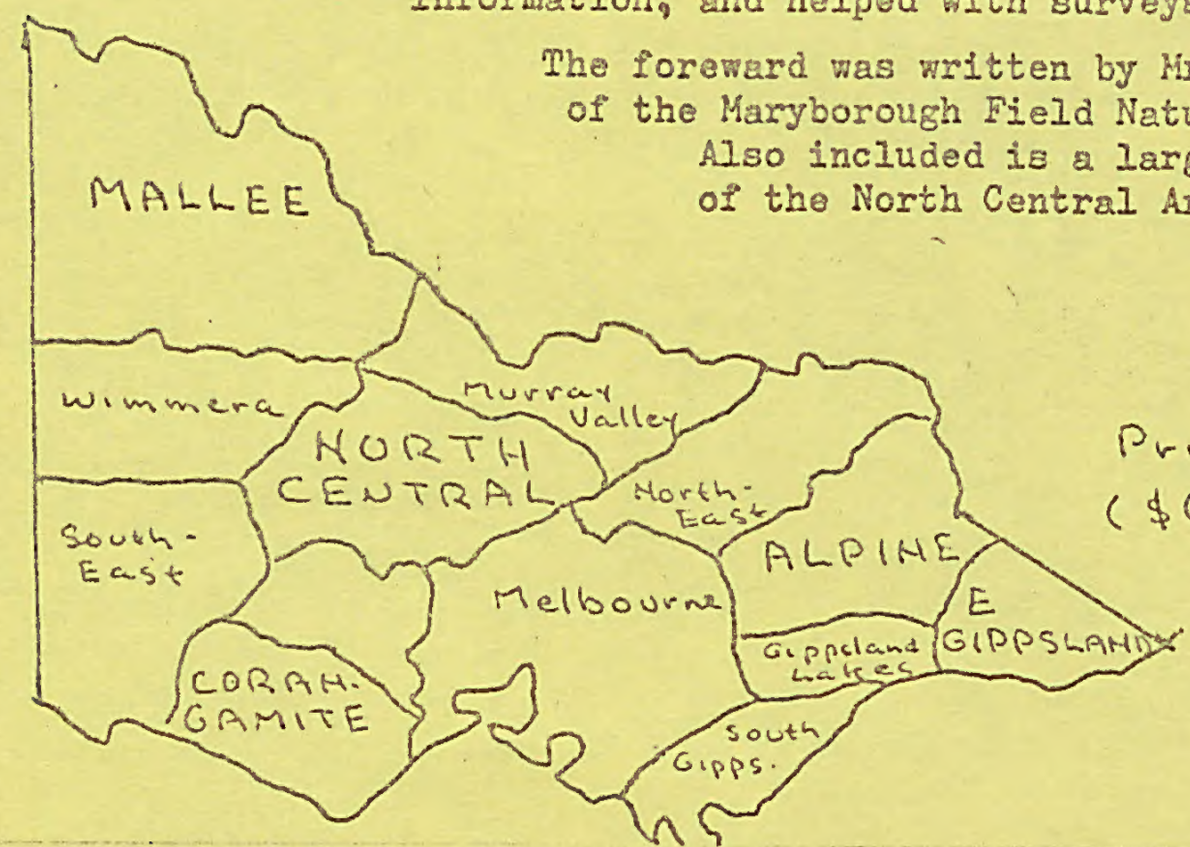
This is the fifth book in the series to be published. In it, the plants are listed giving the occurrence in sub-blocks. Castlemaine, together with the Shires of Maldon, Metcalfe and Newstead make up sub-block K. By comparing the distribution of plants in the sub-blocks, it is possible to pick out the rare and restricted plants. Cliff has listed these plants, and gives information about the occurrence of each of them. The book also gives those plants that are not known for any biological reserve in the area.

The report is thus invaluable in determining the status of the plants in our district, and so gives an excellent basis for considering the conservation value of any block of land. For this reason alone it is well worth its purchase price.

In compiling the book, Cliff has drawn on his knowledge gained over many years. He has supplemented this with the records of many others, and a number of our Club members have contributed information, and helped with surveys.

The foreward was written by Mrs Courtney of the Maryborough Field Naturalists Club. Also included is a large colour map of the North Central Area.

E.P.



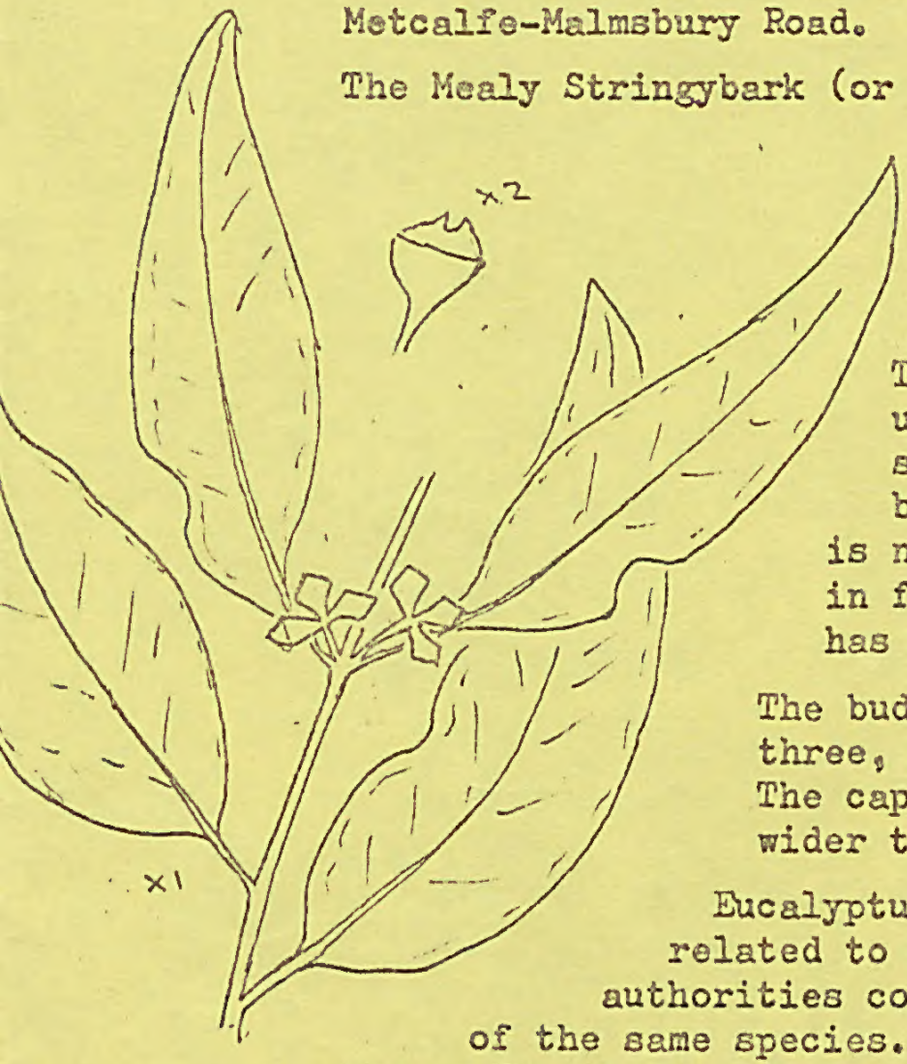
Price $5
($6 posted)

MEALY STRINGYBARK DISCOVERED AT TARADALE or

BENDIGO FIELD NATURALISTS DO IT AGAIN !

Over the past couple of months, members of the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club have extended the known range of a number of Eucalypts.

This time, Don Franklin and John Robinson have made an exciting find at Taradale in the block of bushland on the Metcalfe-Malmsbury Road.



The Mealy Stringybark (or Eucalyptus cephalocarpa), is a common tree in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne. I know of no records of it having been found before near Castlemaine.

The tree has fibrous bark, and usually the leaves are quite silvery. The leaves may be opposite each other, and it is not uncommon to find the tree in flower even though it still has its juvenile leaves.

The buds and fruit may be in groups of three, or in more than three. The cap on the bud may be slightly wider than the bud.

Eucalyptus cephalocarpa is closely related to Eucalyptus cinerea - some authorities consider them to be varieties of the same species. Both make good specimen trees. E. cinerea is a common street tree in Canberra, and at least two club members have one planted in their garden.

The Land Conservation Council haveleft the block of land at Taradale as uncommitted, and this find on the block must add support for a higher conservation status for the block. E.P.

(Note: Some excursions are planned for Bendigo. Its now up to us to find some plants at Bendigo that are not known by the BFNC !)

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A Club Herbarium Hundreds of plants have been collected, named and dried. We now have to stick the plants and labels on card. A job for a working bee or two!

More about this at the meeting.

CASTLEMAINE FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB - PROGRAMME

Fri May 14 Film night

Thurs May 27 Business meeting

Friday June 11 Members and visitors night. If possible, bring a few nature slides, exhibits etc.

Thurs June 24 Business meeting.

Fri July 9th Local Geology
Speaker will be Mr W. Priestley.

Thurs July 22 Business meeting.

Friday Aug 13 To be arranged.

Meetings are held at the Castlemaine Education Centre, Mostyn St., (in the SEC building), starting at 8.00 p.m.

Visitors are welcome at the club's sessions.

Pres: Mr G. Broadway
Sec : Mrs M. Lindsay
Treas: Mr F. Mayer
Newsletter: Mrs R. Mills

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Subscription rates

Family $ 5.00
Single $ 3.00
Student/junior $1.00
Supporting $ 10.00

Excursion Programme

Sat May 15th Laanecoorie Reservoir
Leave Education Centre at 1.30 sharp. Bring your binoculars. Birds and general.

Sat June 12th Fungi. Leave Education Centre at 1.30 sharp. Venue is Firth Park, Trentham East, to look for Fungi.
Take your overcoat !

Sat July 10th Local Geology
Leader: Clive Willman.
Leave Ed. Centre at 1.30 sharp.

Fri 31 July-Sun Aug 1 Ocean Grove
Western Vic Field Nat. Clubs Assn. camp-out, hosted by Geelong FNC.

Sat 14 th. Mosquito Flat

Sat 11th September Werona.

Mon 20 September Annual show-day walk. Possibly Porcupine Ridge. Time and place to be confirmed.

Sun Oct 3 Fryers Ridge Meet at 10.30 at the Market car park. Joint excursion with Bendigo F.N.C.

Sun Oct 17 Stuart Mill with the Maryborough F.N.C.

Sat Oct 23-Sun Oct 24 Creswick
W.V.F.N.C.A. campout at Creswick, hosted by the Creswick F.N.C.

FILMS FOR MAY 14

I have been able to get a selection of fairly short films from which to make a choice.

"The Wander Butterfly" , "Reefs of Steel", "Water against Wildfire", a very old film of our own "Bushland Symphony" (made about 1936) and two others. RM.